

Nurseries, York.

8/6 mo. 1874

Dear Dr. Gray,

It is most unfortunate that the *Mertensia virginica* ^{by J. T. Temple,} were sent, as, alone, even if in good condition, they are barely worth the cost of carriage!

It was the Lith^m - hist^m that I really wanted. The other was only a secondary plant, worth sending if the other was obtainable. I believe I wrote to Dr. Parry telling him not to mind about the *Mertensia* in a subsequent letter, but he probably did not receive it, or not in time. I gave no instruction as to the state in which

the plants should be collected, & I don't not that, in giving the order, Dr. P. assumed that the party ordered to collect, would use proper discretion as to when. Altogether it is a huddle, but cannot be helped.

I think it will be much the best for all Dr. Parry's consignments to be sent direct to us, so that you may have no further trouble on our account. A remark in Mr. Sargent's letter received this morning gives me real pain. He says "Both Dr. Gray & myself had hoped to get more liberal contributions to this Garden, in view of the many valuable plants you have received through it, & the amount of trouble ~~we~~ we have taken to advance your interests, but of course that is a matter we

"entirely leave to yourself."

As regards the trouble you have taken, I most fully admit it, & this is just the reason why I must ask Dr. Parry to give you no more on my account. But as regards an equivalent for plants received, I cannot admit it, if he refers to plants which we rec'd neither from Dr. Parry nor Kellogg, nor from parties whom we paid for what they sent. Beyond such cases as these, I feel not the shadow of a doubt that commercially we have sent more than an equivalent. I do not refer merely to the plants last sent. In that case we sent all that Mr. Sargent asked for that we could suitably send. In the

very same letter he blames us for sending to another party, by his (Mr. S.) order, several very fine & vigorous roots of "Glox-inias" because they were growing! These, he says, died, in consequence, & that we ought to have known better than to send plants that were not fit to send. Well, he sent us a list of various plants which he marked, without apparently any reference either to cost or fitness for sending; & when (using the best judgment we were able to, & being fully aware of how much we were indebted to thee - especially for the great trouble taken on our behalf) we omitted such in his list as we felt sure could not suitably be sent, - then we are blamed for that & practically told that we are stingy! It really pains

to pay in money for all plants
(such as the *Cypripedium* &
spectabile &c) collected specially
for me?

I fear that Mr. S. was an-
noyed at the plants not being
ready for him in Liverpool.

He has himself alone to blame
for it. I personally requested
him to give us a week's notice.
He wrote & told us the exact
day on which we were to send
them off, & we obeyed to the
very day! and now he blames
me for their not being ready
for him, involving "Express" &
charges, breakage at N.Y. custom
house.

Pray tell me how I can
recompense thee personally for
the great trouble which has,
I fully acknowledge, been so
often taken in caring for, & re-
packing Dr. Parry's & Kellogg's plants

It will give me real pleasure to
do so. One thing more I will
touch upon. I know that
Mr. Sargent asked in his
list for "any *Trichomanes* &
Hypnumphyllum" & that I
sent only 2 or 3. If there be
want of prudence in sending
fine healthy *Gloxinias* which
are "just beginning to grow",
it would be tenfold greater
in risking such ferns as these.
Of all ferns they travel the worst
as a rule, & therefore I merely
selected as an experiment
two strong robust kinds that
I thought most likely to endure
the voyage. If wished, I will
willingly risk a few more, but
please understand that on an
average it is a 30% or 40% risk
with every plant ^{of these} (according to
commercial value). I will

order a copy of our new Catalogue
to be sent, & if thou wilt
kindly mark it freely, I will
try to redeem my character!

Believe me to remain
Sincerely & res^{ly} thy fr.
Edw Backhouse

P.S. Since writing I have referred to
the list of plants which Mr. Sargent asked
for. They were just 33 in number.
Of these we sent 19, & added about
a dozen plants that were not asked
for, but which we thought would be
of value to your gardens. The value
of the plants sent was close upon £28, ^{excluding the 24 for ones,}
& of those omitted, £17. I find that only
two *Trichomanes* & 1 *Adiantum* were asked
for, & that all of them were sent. The
omitted plants were merely what we
could not supply at the time. 4 or 5
of them we can now supply, but not the
others. E.B.

me very much, & the more so
because I think it is unjust.
If there is one thing I hate, it
is to be thought niggardly, &
I think that charity would have
supposed that there was some
mistake or misunderstanding
on my part, rather than this?
If Mr. Sargent had sent a long
list of plants that we grow
& we had omitted a number
under the idea that we were
sending "enough", it would have
been very different. But I
think I can refer to past
sendings (of Ferns &c, direct to
thyself, when a marked list of
desiderata was sent to me) to
show that I was at least
willing to send all that I
could that were suitable for
sending? Moreover I think
I have asked to be allowed